

## Bhubaneswar : The Paramount Centre of Effective Tantrism

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Odisha, the ancient Uddiyan had occupied a prominent place in the field of Tantras all over India. The king Indravuti and his sister Laxmikara, Niteidhovani and Piteisauruni were playing the vital role in practising the functional *tantra* in Odisha. Therefore gradually owing to the popularity of *tantra*, a number of tantric centres had made its existence in various parts of Odisha, among which, Bhubaneswar was really the centre of effective tantrism.

Bhubaneswar is known as Ekamrakshetra in several Sanskrit texts like. Ekamrapurana, Svarnadri Mahodaya, Kapila Samhita, Ekamrachandrika and Tirtha Cintamani of Vachaspati Mishra. It is a very secret place of Lord Siva and its other name is Krutibasakshetra.<sup>1</sup> It is also mentioned as a Sakta tantric Peetha in *namostottarasata* and Brahmanilatantra which indicate the prevalence of tantric cult at Bhubaneswar in the ancient ages. Moreover relics of tantric cult are profusely found in and around Bhubaneswar in their various stages of preservation, which also indicate the popularity of this cult in olden days.

### LINGARAJ

Lord Lingaraj Saiva Peetha is also a great tantric Peetha of Odisha, because here the face

of Linga has been situated to western and this western faced Linga has also been seen in tantric pose, which has described in Tantra Shastra. The worship of Lord Lingaraj is absolutely doing with tantric method and its *mantras* are also tantric *mantras* viz. Om Hrim Hroom Sankara Narayanaya Namah Haroom Hrim Om.

A large number of deities have been surrounded to the temple Lingaraj, those who are identified as tantric deities. Like Ganesh who is two armed, north faced and situated lefthand side of the temple. Kapali Peetha and Parasurameswar temple also worth seeing. In the south parts of the temple Goddess named Dakshina Kali, Who is worshipped as Vairava. The Presiding deity of Ekamra named Bhubaneswari, Whose worship is same with Lord Lingaraj. She is the most popular tantric goddess of Bhubaneswar.

On the other hand the outside of the Lingaraj temple a large number of Peethas have been found like an incarnation of Lord Siva, which are known (Astamurtti) Astacandi, Astatirtha and Astasambhu; these are given below :

**Astamurtti :-** Ganesh, Devi, Skanda (Karttikeya), Brusabha, Ganachakra, Sabitri, Kalpabruksha and God (deva) (mainly Lingaraj).

**Asta Tirtha** – Bindusagara, Papanasini, Gangayamuna, Kotitirthah, Brahmesvara, Meghesvara, Alabukesvara and Ramesvara.

**Astasambhu** : - Rudresvara, Isanesvara, Vaidyanatha, Murtesvara, Sukhamesvara, Uttamesvara, Uttaresvara and Kedaresvara.

**Astacandi** :- Who are the most popular tantric Goddesses of Bhubaneswar Surrounding Bindu Sarovara (Bindu tank) named Sukapola, (Kapalidevi), Ramayani, (West) Mohini and Bindhyabasini, (Daksina) Uttarayani (North) Dvarabasini and Ambika (East). Siva Gauri are also situated in Sidhasram.<sup>2</sup>

The influence and evolution of Sakti worship in Bhubaneswar can be studied from the sculptures of the various temples. The most notable group of sculptures that of Saptamatruka which are represented in the temples of Bhubaneswar from the early period. The temple of Vaital or Kapalini which was built in 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. contains on its inner wall.

Several tantric sculptures, the ruling deity being a terrific Camunda. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi<sup>3</sup> thinks that it is during this time of the Sakti worship made its first appearance in Bhubaneswar, as no other temple preceding it has any image of Sakti cult as the presiding deity. According to him the Vaital is derived from the word Vetala or spirit who are invoked by the Tantrikas and Kapalikas to attain Siddhi.

All these indicate the popularity of Saivism and Saktism in Bhubaneswar and their interrelationship in the past ages. According to Dr. K.C. Panigrahi<sup>4</sup> the puzzling erotic sculptures on the temple walls are partly due to the influence of the Tantrikas and Kapalikas who profess curious philosophies about sex. From all these tantric descriptions we confirmed Bhubaneswar is a great tantric centre of Odisha.

### References :

1. Krutibasavidham Ksetra Muktam te Bedabidttamaha / Yah Kailasadapi Slaghyah Nivasah Krutibasasah //  
Skanda Purana Maheswari Khanda Sloka – No. 38  
Vide – Odishara Tantra Samskruti PP. //3
2. Tatrastau candika Santi Mahapapavinasakah / Hradasya Pascima tate sukapola Ramayani // Mohini Bindyaga Caiva Daksina tata masrite / Purvatate Samasritya Cambika Dvaravasini // Uttaratatamasritya Varttate hyuttaresvari / Siddharanya Samasritya Gauripapa vinasini // Vide – Odishara Tantra Samskruti, PP. 125 .
3. K.C. Panigrahi “Archaeological remains at Bhubaneswar” PP 22,233
4. The Ramayani and Daksinacandi worshipped in two modern temples are two old deities of Mahisamardini.

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